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As practically all the evidence that the lecturer has discovered belongs to the period of Danish influence in England, it would seem worth while to consider the possibility of a Scandinavian origin of the institution among the Anglo-Saxons. The terminology surely has the appearance of having been influenced by Norse analogies: *fostorlean*, *fostorland*, and *fostorfæder* look strikingly like the Old Norse equivalents *fóstrlaun*, *fóstrland* and *fóstrfaðir*. But this is a matter that the author has not investigated.

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NOTES.

THE LATIN HISTORIA ASSENECH.

Dr. H. N. MacCracken has had the good fortune to discover in a manuscript in the Earl of Ellesmere's library a Middle-English verse translation of what he calls "a lost Latin version" of the *Historia Assenech*, in his edition of the poem.¹ He has printed under the English text the Latin form of the story found in the *Speculum historiale*, of Vincent de Beauvais, who cites the comments on the story of the *Historia scholastica* of Pierre le Mangeur, one of his principal authorities.² The English translator states (26-30) that he has translated "Asneth storie . . . fro latyn into englysh," and in doing this;

Utterali the latyn in englysh to transpose,

Hit is nuyus, but þe sentence I schal sue in trace";

and a comparison of his version with that of Vincent shows details for which the latter could not have been the source. MacCracken has pointed out that there is authority for some of these details in the Greek original and its oriental versions, but he has not made a very happy suggestion in regard to the immediate source of the English translation:

"Of this *Historia Assenech*, as Vincent calls his authority, I know no copy in existence; and leave the question to those more familiar than myself with the history of Hebrew literature."³

One does not need to be versed in Hebrew literature to be able to cast some light on the question; only a little knowledge of medieval Latin literature and its sources is necessary. Manuscripts of the *Historia Assenech* are noted in the catalogues of English monastic libraries,⁴ numerous manuscripts are found today in English libraries,⁵ and

¹ *Journ. of Eng. and Germ. Phil.* X, 224. ff.

² P. Paris, *Hist. litt. de la France*, XXVIII, 440-1.

³ *Op. cit.* 225.

⁴ E. g. M. R. James, *The Ancient Libraries of Canterbury and Dover*, 62, 117, 118; cf. 511; *Catalogues of the Library of Durham Cathedral* (Surtees Soc.) 5 "Putiphar."

⁵ E. g. Schenkl, *Sitzungsber. d. Wien. Ak. Phil. Hist. Klasse*, 124, I, 11; 136, V, 6, 155, XII, 43, 73; *Reports of the Hist. MSS. Comm.* II, 105.

the text itself was published and commented on almost two centuries ago by Fabricius.⁶ A much abridged version of the form of the story as it appears in the *Speculum* is found in the fifteenth century English translation of the *Alphabetum narrationum*.⁷ If the Latin original of this collection is to be attributed to a certain Arnold, who made his compilation in the early years of the fourteenth century,⁸ it is chronologically possible that he made use of the work of Vincent, written between 1244 and 1254.⁹ But as the great encyclopedist is not cited in the course of a work, which makes a rule of naming its sources, it is more probable that the compiler made use of the same abridgement as Vincent, who in this case, was not responsible for the omission of details in the version of the *Speculum*. An examination of the different manuscripts would probably show their distribution into two classes, of which one would contain the full text represented by the English verse translation, and the other the abridged text used in the two continental Latin compilations.

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THE CRITICAL EDITION OF CHARLES SEALSFIELD'S WORKS.

EDITOR JOURNAL OF ENGLISH AND GERMANIC PHILOLOGY,

SIR:

Will you grant me the privilege of explaining through your valued journal the present situation with regard to the promised historical and critical edition of the works of Charles Sealsfield, a situation which for a considerable time now has been for me the cause of much embarrassment and anxiety.

In the spring of 1907, the *Gesellschaft zur Förderung deutscher Wissenschaft, Kunst und Literatur in Böhmen*, upon the initiative of Professor Jacob Minor of Vienna, resolved to publish, in seventeen volumes of the *Bibliothek deutscher Schriftsteller aus Böhmen*, a standard edition of the complete works of the great German-American novelist. Professor August Sauer, on behalf of the Society, entrusted me with the editorship-in-chief of that portion of the *Bibliothek*, and I was authorized to select among American scholars the requisite number of collaborators.

As is well known to those interested in the subject, no small amount of work has already been performed in the service of the enterprise.

⁶ *Codex pseudepigraphus veteris Testamenti*, Hamburgi 1723, I. 775-784; II, 85.

⁷ *An Alphabet of Tales*, ed. M. M. Banks, 61-4.

⁸ J. A. Herbert, *Library*, N. S. VI, 99-101; *Catalogue of Romances*, III, 423-430; P. Toldo, *Herrigs Archiv*, CXVII, 68-9.

⁹ *Hist. litt. de la France*, XVIII, 456.